FOREORDAINED FROM ALL ETERNITY

The Mystery of the Incarnation According to Some Early Christian and Byzantine Writers

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Introduction

In his *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, Nicodemus Hagiorites (1749–1809) published an addendum titled "Apology for My Note on Our Lady the Theotokos in the Book *Unseen Warfare*," wherein he argues forcefully that God foreordained the Incarnation from eternity, independently of the Fall.[1] The *Handbook* itself is also quite clear about this idea. Drawing on Maximus the Confessor's *Ad Thalassium* 60, Nicodemus writes, "[The Incarnation] is the end toward which all the creatures were from the beginning destined and created in time. . . . This is to be understood in the sense of the preceding will of God and not in the sense of the subsequent will of God. God created the essences of the beings with this end in mind. . . . This is the mystery that describes all the ages and which reveals the great will of God that preexisted infinitely all the ages."[2] It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss Nicodemus's own theological argumentation, or that of other post-Byzantine authors quoted in the "Apology," such as George Koressios or Elias Miniates. I note only that Nicodemus expresses his confidence of speaking in full accord with the witness of Scripture (he refers to Proverbs 8:22, Colossians 1:15, and Romans 8:29) and the patristic tradition.[3]

Some modern scholars, however, consider the idea of the Incarnation as foreordained from all eternity to be nothing more than a *theologoumenon*—a fascinating idea perhaps, but quite an isolated doctrine in certain Byzantine authors, if not a peculiarity of Maximus the Confessor. John Meyendorff, for instance, sees Maximus's doctrine of the "Incarnation as a precondition of the final glorification, independent of man's sinfulness and corruption" as "the major and, apparently, the only exception" in Byzantine theology.[4] According to Georges Florovsky, "the problem of the relation between the mystery of the Incarnation and the original purpose of Creation was not touched upon by the Fathers . . . systematically," Maximus being "the only Father who was directly concerned with the problem."[5] More recently Jean-Claude Larchet stated the same opinion: "[N]i Jean Damascène, ni Nicholas Cabasilas, ni Grégoire Palamas n'ont cette conception. Aucun Père oriental prédécesseur ou contemporain de Maxime ne semble avoir affirmé catégoriquement que l'Incarnation aurait eu lieu même si le péché n'eût pas existé."[6]

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1 "The mystery of the incarnate dispensation of the divine Logos . . . comes before all creation, and . . . was preordained before the preordaining of the salvation of all who are being saved. Do you see that God made man in His own image for this reason, that man might be able to accommodate the Archetype through the Incarnation?" The quotation is taken from P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person* (Crestwood, NY, 1987), 228, 230. Unfortunately, the "Apology" has been excluded from the English translation of Nicodemus's *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, "for practical reasons." See P. Chamberas, "Translator's Foreword" to *Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York–Mahwah, NJ, 1989), xii.

2 Nicodemus Hagiorites, *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, 206.

3 See Nicodemus's "Apology" in Nellas, *Deification*, 237.

4 J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1979), 160–61.

5 G. Florovsky, "Cur Deus Homo? The Motive of the Incarnation," in *Collected Works* (Belmont, MA, 1976), 3:163–70, at 164, 168.

6 J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1996), 87 n. 17. Larchet is here criticizing Myrrha Lot-

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There are, on the other hand, a number of older studies by scholars such as Irenée Hausherr or Adhémar d'Alès, which claim that, by viewing the Incarnation as essentially unrelated to the Fall, patristic writers such as Irenaeus of Lyon, Maximus the Confessor, and Isaac of Nineveh were proponents of the "Scotist" position *avant la lettre*.[7] In the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar, "there is no doubt that Maximus . . . would have placed himself on the side of Scotus, without a second thought, in the [later] scholastic controversy: not redemption from sin, but the unification of the world in itself and with God is the ultimate motivating cause for the Incarnation and, as such, the first idea of the Creator, existing in advance of all creation."[8] Von Balthasar acknowledges, however, that "the presuppositions of that scholastic controversy, which begins with an order of being—a world free from sin—that is only possible, never historically real, is far from Maximus's thought."[9] What one finds in Byzantine theology is therefore not Scotism before Scotus.[10]

There exists nevertheless in Byzantium a strong and well-represented tradition, shared by Maximus with several other outstanding theologians, which does, indeed, view the Incarnation of the Word as the fundamental mystery of creation, conceived by God before all eternity. In what follows, I shall focus on Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor, Isaac of Nineveh, and Nicholas Cabasilas. I shall also point to other writers, such as Gregory Palamas, Symeon the New Theologian,

or, earlier still, Jacob of Serug, Tertullian, and Irenaeus of Lyon, who hold views on the Incarnation congenial with that of Maximus. My overall thesis is that the Maximian view is not an "exception" but rather a doctrine shared by significant early Christian and later Byzantine writers, which stretches back to the very beginnings of Christian thought.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite

There are at least two elements that are particularly relevant to the theme under discussion: first, Pseudo-Dionysius's speculation on unities and differentiations in God; second, his discussion of the interplay between God in complete transcendence, "beyond being," and the outpourings in which God gives himself away unceasingly for the life of the world.

Regarding the first element: after establishing that all names are predicated about God in his unity, not about distinct Persons (*Divine Names* 2.1), and following a series of general statements about the distinction between τὰ ἡνωμένα and τὰ διακεκριμένα (*Divine Names* 2.2–3), Dionysius understands that a more complex discussion is necessary. Therefore, after reaffirming the fundamental distinction (the ἑνώσεις refer to the divine μονή, the διακρίσεις to the divine πρόοδος, *Divine Names* 2.4, PG 3:640D), he introduces the following crucial explanation: "There are specific unions and differentiations which are peculiar to either the union or differentiation that has been spoken about."[11] Thus, as Eugenio Corsini and John D. Jones have observed,[12] Pseudo-Dionysius distinguishes not only between ἑνώσεις and διακρίσεις, but also between what is united and what is differentiated within each of these. We obtain four cases:

Borodine, who argued the opposite view in her fundamental study, "La doctrine de la 'déification' dans l'Eglise grecque," *RHR* 4 (1931): 1–32.

7   According to Adhémar d'Alès ("La doctrine de la récapitulation en Saint Irénée," *RSR* 6 [1916]: 185–211, at 191), even though Irenaeus "a ouvert la voie où devait plus tard marcher l'école thomiste," in some of his statements "nous reconnaissons les futures positions de l'école scotiste." Irénée Hausherr ("Un précurseur de la théorie Scotiste sur la fin de l'Incarnation: Isaac de Ninivé," *RSR* 22 [1932]: 316–20) extended the debate to Isaac of Nineveh.

8   H. U. von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. B. Daley (1961; repr. San Francisco, 2003), 272.

9   Von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 273. Von Balthasar is echoed by V. Lossky in *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (1948; repr. Crestwood, NY, 1976), 13: "Maximus does not raise the Scotist question. . . . Less soteriological as a theologian and perhaps more metaphysical than the other Fathers, he does not swerve at all from their practical way of thought; unreal cases do not exist for him."

10   For an exposition of Scotus's position, see the Latin text and English translation of John Duns Scotus's "The Predestination of Christ and His Mother," in *John Duns Scotus: Four Questions on Mary*, ed. and trans. A. B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure, NY, 2000), 19–29; A. B. Wolter, "Duns Scotus and the Predestination of Christ," *The Cord* 5 (1955): 366–72.

11   καὶ τῆς εἰρημένης ἑνώσεως ἴδια καὶ αὖθις τῆς διακρίσεως εἶναί τινας ἰδικὰς καὶ ἑνώσεις καὶ διακρίσεις (*Divine Names* 2.4, PG 3:641A). Texts quoted from the Corpus Dionysiacum come from *Corpus Dionysiacum*, vol. 1, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita: De divinis nominibus*, ed. B. R. Suchla, Patristische Texte und Studien 33 (Berlin, 1990); *Corpus Dionysiacum*, vol. 2, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita: De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae*, ed. G. Heil and A.-M. Ritter, Patristische Texte und Studien 36 (Berlin, 1991). For a more detailed treatment, see B. G. Bucur, "Dionysius East and West: Unities, Differentiations, and the Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies," *Dionysius* 26 (2008): 115–38, esp. 116–26.

12   E. Corsini, *Il trattato "De Divinis nominibus" dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti neoplatonici al Parmenide* (Turin, 1962), 39–42; J. D. Jones,

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1. Divine unity
   1.1. "what is united in the divine unity";
   1.2. "what is differentiated in the divine unity";
2. Divine differentiation
   2.1. "what is united in the divine differentiation," and, finally,
   2.2. "what is differentiated in the divine differentiation."

The subdivision between what is united and differentiated within each of the two fundamental categories is secondary: the subcategories (united unity, differentiated unity, and, respectively, united differentiation, differentiated differentiation) do not override the category established by the primary distinction between what is united and what is differentiated. Pseudo-Dionysius makes this very clear when he says that "it is not permissible either to divide what is united or to confound what is differentiated."[13]

Earlier (*Divine Names* 2.3, 640BC), Dionysius had presented the same scheme differently. There are two unities and two differentiations: the first unity pertains to "whatever ... is of the preeminent denial," that is, the divine being beyond being; the second unity is "everything pertaining to causality: good, beauty, being," and so forth. As for the two differentiations, the first one refers to God as Trinity, the second to "the all-complete and unchanged constitution of our Jesus as well as all that which refers to the essential mystery of his love for humankind." The scheme would be the following:

1. "What is united"
   1.1. "what is united in the divine unity";
   2.1. "what is united in the divine differentiation";
2. "What is differentiated"
   1.2. "what is differentiated in the divine unity";
   2.2. "what is differentiated in the divine differentiation."

The advantage of this earlier scheme is that it offers some information on the otherwise shadowy "differentiation within the divine differentiation." Pseudo-Dionysius has in mind not only the differentiation of the *proodos* in

a variety of gifts: the mystery of Christ's *philanthropy* is very clearly a reference to the Incarnation, and "the constitution of our Jesus" could very well refer to the hypostatic union.[14] In this case, the Incarnation would be seen as part of the grand movement of divine differentiation: as One is to Trinity, so is the divine procession to the Incarnation.

Let us turn now to the second element of relevance to our theme, which is that Pseudo-Dionysius's Christology is developed within the larger framework of transcendent and immanent divinity. As Alexander Golitzin notes, both procession and return are "concentrated ... specifically in the second Person of the Trinity."[15] Christ abides "beyond beingly" (ὑπερουσίως), beyond all things (ὁ πάντων ἐπέκεινα) in his divinity,[16] transcendent and immovable on his throne (*Epistle* 9:3, 1109C). At the same time, however, inasmuch as he is the "thearchy," "ray," "providence," and so forth,[17] he is the active cause of being and well-being of all,[18] and bestows on created beings—angelic minds and humans alike—fragrance, happiness, nourishment, divine pleasure,[19] and most divine inspirations.[20]

This christological framing of both procession and return leads to the conclusion that Pseudo-Dionysius views the economy of the Incarnation as, essentially, a continuation and restoration of the general eternally foreordained process by which the world is increasingly brought into communion with God. It is helpful to consider the use of the terms "thearchy," "providence," and "theophany."

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introduction to *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite: The Divine Names and Mystical Theology* (Milwaukee, 1980), 34.

13   *Divine Names* 2.2, PG 3:640A (καὶ οὔτε τὰ ἡνωμένα διαιρεῖν θεμιτὸν οὔτε τὰ διακεκριμένα συγχεῖν).

14   For a pertinent argumentation of the fundamentally Christian character of φιλανθρωπία, see A. Golitzin, *Et Introibo ad Altare Dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita, with Special Reference to Its Predecessors in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Thessalonike, 1994), 65–66. Golitzin provides a list of instances in the *Corpus Dionysiacum* where φιλανθρωπία is used in direct reference to the Incarnation (ibid., 66 n. 161).

15   Ibid., 105.

16   *Ecclesiatical Hierarchy* 1.3, PG 3:373D; *Epistle* 4, PG 3:1071.

17   For the equation of "ray" with Christ, see I. Perczel, "Une théologie de la lumière: Denys l'Aréopagite et Évagre le Pontique," *REAug* 45 (1999): 79–120, esp. 86. For the more problematic equation of "thearchy" with the Logos, see idem, "Le Pseudo-Denys, lecteur d'Origène," in *Origeniana VII: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven, 1999), 673–709, esp. 681–85. See also J. N. Jones, "The Status of the Trinity in Dionysian Thought," *JR* 80 (2000): 645–57, at 652.

18   *Epistle* 9.3, PG 3:1109C; cf. *Epistle* 8.1, PG 3:1085D.

19   These elements are found throughout *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 4.3, esp. 1–4 (PG 3:473B–480B).

20   *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 4.3.10, PG 3:481D.

Pseudo-Dionysius generally uses "thearchic" for God's "energetic" presence in the world.[21] The term, however, is also used in speaking about the death of Christ, so that the "thearchic" economy of the Incarnation expresses the eternal "thearchic" movement of the divine outpouring.[22]

As for "providence," the Dionysian view is that "the λόγοι of each are held in the divine procession and therefore that created being mirrors providence. . . ."[23] But "providence" very clearly can be used as a christological title: "the divine hierarch, standing before the holy altar, hymns the . . . sacred theurgies of Jesus, our most divine Providence."[24] In *Divine Names* 11.5 (953AB), the text speaks of "the providence of Jesus" making "that peace which is ineffable and was foreordained from eternity and which reconciles (ἀποκαταλλάσσοντος) us to himself." The lines immediately preceding and following the fragment describe this "peace" as a result of Christ's *philanthropy*, consisting in the reconciliation with the Father, brought about through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.[25] Yet "philanthropy" and "reconciliation" are terms that point unmistakably to the concrete event of the Incarnation.[26]

The *Corpus Areopagiticum* identifies "The-One-Who-Is," who spoke to Moses, with Jesus.[27] In Epistle 9.1 (1105A), God's intelligible providences are defined

as his gifts, appearances, powers, attributes, allotments, abodes—in short, all biblical theophanies. In conclusion, under the wrappings of his sophisticated philosophical language, Pseudo-Dionysius espouses the traditional understanding of Old Testament theophanies as Christophanies.[28]

From the passages just analyzed, I conclude, in agreement with Golitzin, that "for Dionysius, God's Providence and the created nature that it sustains and draws to itself both presuppose the Incarnation," so that "the Incarnation is . . . the result—we might almost say the inescapable result—of that movement of God that weaves together all the Dionysian universe."[29] This view will be echoed by Maximus the Confessor, who can therefore hardly be seen as a theological "exception." Framing the matter more broadly, and also anticipating what will be evident in Maximus, Ysabel de Andia formulates the following conclusion: "au centre de la mystique de Denys, il y a un 'mystère de Jésus' (*Epistle* 3.1069B). . . . Le reproche fait à Denys de ne pas faire de place au Christ n'est pas fondé: l'ensemble des textes cités montre que le Christ est principe et fin de toutes choses."[30]

It is usually assumed that the association of God *ad extra* with the second Person of the Trinity is a specific feature of second- and third-century authors such as Irenaeus or Origen, and that it was later advocated, in a hardened subordinationist version, by Arian theology.[31]

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21 In *CelestialHierarchy* 13.4 (PG 3:305BC), the initiatory angel teaches Isaiah that the work of purification along the hierarchy occurs by the thearchic "works" (τὰς θεαρχικὰς ἐνεργείας) gradually manifested along the different levels of the hierarchy. In *Epistle* 2 (PG 3:1068A), in order to explain how the transcendent God, ὁ πάντων ἐπέκεινα, is also ὑπὲρ θεαρχίαν . . . καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀγαθαρχίαν, Ps.-Dionysius says that "divinity" and "goodness" should be considered as τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ ἀγαθοποιοῦ καὶ θεοποιοῦ δώρου (*Epistle* 2, PG 3:1069A). In other words, "thearchy" and "agatharchy" stand for God's deifying gift of Himself to the world. Cf. *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7.3.7 (PG 3:561CD), where "thearchic" is used for God's economy—his love of humankind and his ordinances.

22 τὸν θεαρχικὸν . . . Ἰησοῦ τοῦ ζωοδότου . . . θάνατον (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3.2.7, PG 3:404B).

23 Golitzin, *Et Introibo* (n. 14 above), 102.

24 *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3.3.12, PG 3:441C.

25 *Divine Names* 11.5, PG 3:953AB.

26 For φιλανθρωπία, see n. 14 above.

27 Perczel, "Théologie de lumière" (n. 17 above), 82–83. The main arguments are concentrated in nn. 7–9. In *Celestial Hierarchy* 1.2, 121A (Οὐκοῦν Ἰησοῦν ἐπικαλεσάμενοι τὸ πατρικὸν φῶς τὸ ὂν τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὁ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον), the participle τὸ ὂν can be read either as reinforcing "light" (the fatherly light, the true one), or it can be treated in its own right, which would result in translating: "Jesus, the fatherly light, the Existing One." According to Perczel, this second reading is supported by the Syriac manuscript tradition, by

stylistic arguments, and by the occurrence of the same construction in *Epistle* 1, PG 3:1065A.

28 This view went unchallenged until Augustine, and it remained as traditional in Eastern theology and liturgy as the doctrine of created theophanies became to the post-Augustinian West. For the christological use of the divine name in early Christianity, see C. Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," *VChr* 57 (2003): 115–58. For the pre-Augustinian exegesis of biblical theophanies, see G. Legeay, "L'Ange et les théophanies dans l'Ecriture Sainte d'après la doctrine des Pères," *Revue Thomiste* 10 (1902): 138–58, 405–24; 11 (1903): 46–69, 125–54; J. Lebreton, "Saint Augustin, théologien de la Trinité: Son exégèse des théophanies," *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 2 (1931): 821–36; B. Studer, *Zur Theophanie-Exegese Augustins: Untersuchung zu einem Ambrosius-Zitat in der Schrift "De Videndo Deo,"* Studia Anselmiana 59 (Rome, 1971); M.-R. Barnes, "Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine's *De Trinitate* I," *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 43–60; idem, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19 (2003): 329–56; B. G. Bucur, "Theophanies and Vision of God in Augustine's *De Trinitate*," *SVThQ* 52 (2008): 67–93.

29 Golitzin, *Et Introibo* (n. 14 above), 63, 66.

30 Y. de Andia, *Henôsis: L'union à Dieu chez Denys l'Aréopagite* (Leiden, 1996), 442–43.

31 For Irenaeus, the Son is "the visible of the Father" (*Adv. haer.* 4.6.6). For Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.* 14) and Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 1.124.4;

The trinitarian theology that is developed in response to the Arian challenge made the earlier Logos theology obsolete; in the new paradigm, elaborated by the Cappadocians, "the immense gulf... opened up in the 'space' between God and world previously occupied by the Logos" was bridged by the notion of common power or operation of the triune God.[32]

Yet we see the Logos theology of the Apologists and Alexandrians reemerge forcefully (admittedly, at another level of theological maturity, quite far from the earlier subordinatianism) with Maximus Confessor, who restates Pseudo-Dionysius's One-multiplied-out-of-goodness in terms of the One Logos identical to the multiple logoi of creation.

Maximus the Confessor

In the case of Maximus the Confessor, the centrality of the Logos in virtually all areas of theological reflection is much clearer.[33] Indeed, Maximus's thought revolves around the divine Logos by whom and in view of whom the entire cosmos was created, subsists, and advances toward transfiguration and deification. It is in the Logos that creation finds its unity of origin, movement, and purpose; at the same time, it is the Logos that founds the diversity of creation.[34]

Maximus sharply contrasts himself with the Origenists, who were envisaging a preexistence of beings in God and were taking movement and diversity to be results of a premundane Fall.[35] In his Logos theology Maximus stresses the idea of creation *ex nihilo*,[36] while, on the other hand, he makes it clear that it is not the creatures but their particular logoi that "preexist" in the unique divine Logos. This "preexistence," however, does not mean that the logoi subsist in a distinct way. The expression "logoi of the creatures" is another way of saying that all creatures have the One hypostatic Logos as their principle and cause. Developing the Ps.-Dionysian theme of the One multiplied out of goodness in his ordering, illumining, and trophic "outpourings," Maximus speaks of the same Logos, who, in himself, is utterly transcendent, yet whose goodness is revealed and multiplied in all things.[37] It is in this sense that "the one Logos is many logoi and the many logoi are One."[38]

The preexistence ascribed to the logoi is different from that of Origen's "minds," because it does not refer to the created beings themselves; neither do Maximus's logoi preexist within the divine essence. They are rather conceived of as volitional thoughts, at the level of divine energies.[39]

Strom. 7.10.58; *Excerpta* 10.6; 12.1), the Logos is the face (πρόσωπον) of the Father. For Origen (e.g., *Jo.* 1.38; *Princ.* 1.2.3) the Logos is "God's hypostasized immanence" (Golitzin, *Et Introibo*, 274). Later, in the fourth century, Eunomius (*Liber Apologeticus* 24) will advocate a similar position, viewing the Son as the Father's "solidified energy" (Golitzin, *Et Introibo*, 287).

32 Golitzin, ibid., 288 (for his examples from the Cappadocians, see 293–96); idem, "'The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God's Glory in a Body': Controversy on the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature," *Studia Monastica* 44 (2002): 13–43, at 14. The same argument, though less developed, appears in Lossky, *The Vision of God*, 2nd ed., trans. A. Moorhouse (Leighton, Buzzard, 1973), 32, 61, 66; idem, *Mystical Theology* (n. 9 above), 71.

33 Unless otherwise noted, in the ensuing notes and text English translations of texts by Maximus the Confessor have been taken from *St. Maximus the Confessor: On the Cosmic Mystery of Christ,* trans. P. Blowers and R. L. Wilken (Crestwood, NY, 2003); page numbers from this volume are given in square brackets.

34 "If by reason and wisdom a person has come to understand that what exists was brought out of non-being into being by God, if he intelligently directs the soul's imagination to the infinite differences and variety of things as they exist by nature, and turns his questing eye with understanding toward the intelligible model according to which things

have been made (τὸν καθ᾽ ὃν ἐκτίσθησαν λόγον), would he not know that the one Logos is many logoi? This is evident in the incomparable differences among created things. For each is unmistakably unique in itself and its identity remains distinct in relation to other things. He will also know that the many logoi are the one Logos (ἕνα τοὺς πολλούς) to whom all things are related and who exists in himself without confusion, the essential and individually distinctive God, the Logos of God the Father...." (*Ambigua* 7:1077C [54]).

35 See the classic study by P. Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua* (Rome, 1955), as well as P. Blowers, "The Logology of Maximus the Confessor in His Criticism of Origenism," in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. J. Daly (Leuven, 1992): 570–76.

36 Referring to τὰ ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος παρὰ Θεοῦ εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρῆχθαι, Sherwood (*The Earlier Ambigua*, 168) notes: "This is not a casual phrase; he repeats it twice in this first explanation: *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1085A and C."

37 *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1080A [55].

38 πολλοὶ λόγοι ὁ εἷς λόγος ἐστί, καὶ εἷς οἱ πολλοί (*Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1081B [57]).

39 Maximus explicitly identifies what he calls logoi with what Clement of Alexandria and Ps.-Dionysius had termed, respectively, "divine willings" and "divine predeterminations and willings" (*Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1085). In the course of the monothelitic and monoenergetic debates, the distinction between divine essence and divine will and operation/energy was applied to the christological issue at stake (see H. Schaeder, "Die Christianisierung der Aristotelischen Logik in der Byzantinischen Theologie," *Theologia* 33 [1962]: 1–21). John of Damascus assumes the

The overarching framework for Christian cosmology is the triad γένεσις–κίνησις–στάσις, which, as Polycarp Sherwood has definitively proved, Maximus developed in order to counter the Origenistic triad στάσις–κίνησις–γένεσις.[40] The progress from "image" to "likeness" translates as ascent from *being* to *well-being* (εὖ εἶναι, the locus of ascetic-mystical life) to *ever-being* (ἀεὶ εἶναι).[41] This movement is also an ascent to and abiding in one's own particular source, πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν ἀρχὴν ἀναβάσεώς τε καὶ οἰκειότητος.[42] As Maximus explains, "[T]here is no end toward which he can be moved, nor is he moved in any other way than toward his beginning, that is, he ascends to the Logos by whom he was created and in whom all things will ultimately be restored."[43] The purpose of this movement is, in Maximian language, the coincidence of "the mode of existence" (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) with "the logos of nature" (λόγος τοῦ εἶναι, λόγος φύσεως);[44] in another perspective, it is the coincidence of deliberate will (θέλημα γνωμικόν) with natural will (θέλημα φυσικόν).

Since the human being is a "laboratory" (ἐργαστήριον) of sorts, or the "natural link" (σύνδεσμός τις φυσικός)

between the extremities of creation,[45] its ultimate becoming also implies the transfiguration of the entire created world.[46] With the Fall, the fertile distinctions of creation have hardened into painful antagonisms. Having become enslaved to a mode of existence (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) opposed to its λόγος φύσεως, humanity is no longer able to fulfill its destiny and, consequently, its responsibility toward the cosmos. Yet, given Adam's "logomorphic" constitution, God's "great counsel" with regard to humanity and the world cannot be broken by the Fall; the realization of the likeness is inherently contained in the divinely established "image of God."

Maximus describes the work of restoration by the term ἀνακεφαλαίωσις ("recapitulation"), the same term he uses to describe the "law" governing created being: "For we believe that a logos of angels preceded their creation, a logos preceded the creation of each of the beings and powers that fill the upper world, a logos preceded the creation of human beings, a logos preceded everything that receives its becoming from God.... This same Logos whose goodness is revealed and multiplied in all the things that have their origin in him, with the degree of beauty appropriate to each being, recapitulates all things in himself (Eph 1:10)."[47] The first thing to note about this passage is its cosmological rather than soteriological

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same Dionysian-Maximian tradition and clearly affirms that the *thelemata* are not to be thought within the divine essence (*De fide orthodoxa* 2.2). Gregory Palamas sees himself as a continuation of the preceding theology. For an overall exposition of this theological tradition, see D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge, 2004).

40 See Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1067–1101.

41 See Maximus, *Ambigua* 13, PG 91:1116B; *Ambigua* 157, PG 91:1392A. In *Ad Thalassium* 60 (PG 90:621), Maximus calls the last stage "ever-well-being" (ἀεὶ εὖ εἶναι).

42 Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1084.

43 Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1080C [56]: οὐκ ἔχων λοιπὸν ἄλλοθί ποι μετὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν καθ᾿ ὃν ἐκτίσθη λόγον ἄνοδόν τε καὶ ἀποκατάστασιν κινηθῆναι, ἢ πῶς κινηθῆναι, τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θείῳ δηλονότι σκοπῷ κινήσεως αὐτοῦ αὐτὸν πέρας λαβούσης τὸν θεῖον σκοπόν.

44 The distinction between λόγος τοῦ εἶναι (λόγος φύσεως) and τρόπος ὑπάρξεως is crucial for Maximus. It started as a trinitarian term (see F. Heinzer's very helpful overview of its previous patristic use, in his *Gottes Sohn als Mensch: Die Struktur des Menschseins Christi bei Maximus Confessor* [Freiburg, 1980], 30–58), but in Maximus it functions almost exclusively to express relations of the human and divine in the restored and deified creature. Sherwood (*The Earlier Ambigua*, 179) also remarks that "it is borne out by the not infrequent use of *logos* as referring to natural contemplation and of *tropos* to the virtues" (e.g., *Ad Thalassium* 22, PG 90:321B; *Ad Thalassium* 37, PG 90:385BC; *Ambigua* 144, PG 91:1381D–1384A). The idea of τρόπος is sometimes (e.g., *Ambigua* 101, PG 91:1289C) expressed by "logos of being *how*" (λόγος τοῦ πῶς εἶναι). From *Ambigua* 41 on, the principle of πῶς εἶναι appears as τρόπος, in order to distinguish it more clearly from the λόγος τοῦ εἶναι (see Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn als Mensch*, 132).

45 Maximus, *Ambigua* 106, PG 91:1305. For a comprehensive study on this topic, see the excellent article by P. Argárate, "Τι τῶν ὅλων συνεκτικώτατον ἐργαστήριον: El hombre como mediador en el pensamiento de Máximo el Confesor," *OCP* 66 (2000): 317–34.

46 In *Ambigua* 106 (PG 91:1305D) Maximus presents a series of divisions (διαιρέσεις) that make evident God's intended plan for creation. Each new division follows from the immediately preceding one: 1. uncreated–created; 2. Within "created": intelligible–sensible; 3. Within "sensible": heaven (sky)–earth; 4. Within "earth": Eden–rest of the world (*oikoumene*); 5. Within "Eden": Male–female. These divisions could be termed "fertile distinctions," i.e., distinctions that found a relation between their respective terms, a relation meant to result in the overcoming of the distinction. They "express the limited character of creation, which is indeed the very condition of its existence; at the same time, they are problems to be resolved, obstacles to be surmounted on the way towards union with God" (Lossky, *Mystical Theology* [n. 9 above], 110). God's "original plan" for humans was that they climb up the subsequent levels of division, overcoming *in themselves* the respective limitations. Finally, "there remaining nothing outside himself but God alone, man had only to give himself to Him in a complete abandonment of love, and thus return to Him the whole created universe gathered together in his whole being. God himself would then in His turn have given Himself to man, who would then ... by grace possess all that God possesses by nature" (ibid.).

47 Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1080A [55]: Λόγον γὰρ ἀγγέλων δημιουργίας προκαθηγεῖσθαι πιστεύομεν, λόγον ἑκάστης τῶν συμπληρουσῶν τὸν ἄνω κόσμον οὐσιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων, λόγον ἀνθρώπων, λόγον παντὸς τῶν ἐκ Θεοῦ τὸ εἶναι λαβόντων ... καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ

thrust. Maximus refutes the Origenistic interpretation of a fragment from Gregory of Nyssa, and posits instead that the particular logoi are fixed in the unique Logos. Thus, he uses ἀνακεφαλαίωσις to describe the "rationality" of created being and its natural movement toward the divine purpose.[48] But Maximus also applies ἀνακεφαλαίωσις to the work of Christ, stressing in this way the idea that redemption is nothing more than a restoration of the natural, original movement of creation.

The process by which the Logos reunites the fundamental distinctions of creation constitutes an antithetic parallel to what has been described as the "original plan" of humanity, and is described in the final part of *Ambigua* 41 (PG 91, col. 1305) and in *Ad Thalassium* 48: by his virginal birth, Christ bridges the division between male and female (cf. Galatians 3:28); by his death and resurrection, he breaks down the barrier between Paradise and the world (cf. Luke 23:43); he then ascends and presents to the Father the entire creation recapitulated in himself. In Christ, however, all natural divisions of creation, as well as the fundamental division between the created and the uncreated, have been overcome. At this point it is helpful to introduce one of the fundamental texts of the Confessor: "This mystery was known solely to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit before all the ages.... Christ was foreknown not as what he was in himself by nature, but as what he manifested when, in the economy of salvation, he subsequently became human on our behalf. For truly he who is the Creator of the essence of created beings by nature had also to become the very Author of the deification of creatures by grace, in order that the Giver of well-being might appear also as the gracious Giver of eternal well-being."[49]

An anonymous scholiast synthesizes the above by noting that the hypostatic union has been preconceived.[50] Indeed, if Christ is foreknown not κατὰ φύσιν, as divine, but καθ᾿οἰκονομίαν, in his taking on human nature, it follows that the latter is part of God's original design for mankind. Moreover, it is the Logos who becomes incarnate because of his unique relation to humanity: he is the "demiurge" that granted "being"; it was fitting, therefore, that he be also the "effector" (αὐτουργός) of "ever-well-being" or deification. Thus, in light of Maximus's theory of the "stages" of created existence, the hypostatic union appears as the necessary cause of *ever-being*: "[H]e showed that we were created for this, and also that God's good purpose for us from before the ages did not suffer any renewal whatsoever according to its proper logos, but rather came to be realized by means of another, newer mode, introduced later on.... And this, as we all believe, is the mystery of the most mystical advent of God to humankind."[51]

In this passage, for which I have given my own translation, the Incarnation appears as the new manner of realizing the pre-eternal destiny allotted to humankind. What I find crucial is the affirmation that the newness of the Incarnation, in comparison to what would have happened if Adam had not fallen, is situated at the level of *tropos*, not logos. It is, in other words, the Incarnation of the Logos that restores Adam's original movement toward perfection. This fits well with Maximus's use of ἀνακεφαλαίωσις to describe both the Incarnation and the rationality of created beings, so that the work of Christ appears as the restoration of this natural movement. Without thereby undermining the historical Christ-event, Maximus sees the death and resurrection of Christ as the full embodiment of the universal law divinely inscribed in creation. The primordial sin, grave as it was, could not have affected the logos of created existence. This is precisely the meaning of the following affirmation: "The mystery of the Incarnation of the Word contains in itself the meaning of all the symbols and all the enigmas of Scripture, as well as the hidden meaning of all sensible and intelligible creation. He who knows the mystery of the Cross and the Tomb knows also the essential principle of all things. Finally, he who ... finds himself initiated in the mystery of the Resurrection, apprehends the end for which God created all things from the beginning."[52]

τὴν ἑκάστου ἀναλογίαν ἀγαθοπρεπῶς δεικνύμενόν τε καὶ πληθυνόμενον, καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάντα ἀνακεφαλαιούμενον.

48 Ibid., col. 1080.

49 Maximus, *Ad Thalassium* 60 (PG 90:624 [127–28]: Τοῦτο τὸ μυστήριον προεγνώσθη πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων μόνῳ τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι... Προεγνώσθη οὖν ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ὅπερ ἦν κατὰ φύσιν δι᾿ ἑαυτὸν, ἀλλ᾿ ὅπερ ἐφάνη κατ᾿ οἰκονομίαν δι᾿ ἡμᾶς γενόμενος ὕστερον. Ἔδει γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸν κατὰ φύσιν τῆς τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας δημιουργὸν καὶ τῆς κατὰ χάριν αὐτουργὸν γενέσθαι τῶν γεγονότων θεώσεως, ἵνα ὁ τοῦ εὖ εἶναι δοτὴρ φανῇ καὶ τοῦ ἀεὶ εὖ εἶναι χαριστικός.

50 Τούτων ἕνωσις καθ᾿ ὑπόστασιν προεπενοήθη φησὶ κατὰ πρόνοιαν πρὸς τὸν ἐξ οὗ ταῦτα γεγόνασιν (PG 90:625, scholion α΄).

51 Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, PG 91:1097B–D: ἔδειξε καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τούτῳ γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ τὸν πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων περὶ ἡμᾶς παντάγαθον τοῦ Θεοῦ σκοπὸν μὴ δεξάμενον καθ᾿ ὁτιοῦν καινισμὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον λόγον, εἰς πλήρωσιν δὲ ἐλθόντα δι᾿ ἄλλου δηλαδὴ ἐπεισαχθέντος καινοτέρου τρόπου... Καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τῆς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους τοῦ Θεοῦ μυστικωτάτης ἐπιδημίας, ὡς πάντες πιστεύομεν, τὸ μυστήριον.

52 Maximus, *Gnostic Centuries* 1.66, PG 90:1108. Trans. Lossky, *Mystical Theology* (n. 9 above), 138.

sequence (first the Fall, then the design of the Incarnation) from the temporal realm into God's inscrutable eternity: first the foreknowledge of the Fall, then the fore-ordination of the Incarnation.[62]

Isaac of Nineveh

Another writer who explicitly advocates the Maximian position is Isaac of Nineveh. This was first noted by Irenée Hausherr in the article I mentioned in the introduction. Here is one of the crucial passages, drawn from Isaac's *Centuries on Spiritual Knowledge*. Since the *Centuries* have not yet been translated into English, and only Italian and French translations are available,[63] I quote Hausherr's very literal Latin rendering of the Syriac:

> Non alia de causa fecit Deus hoc, nisi ut amorem quem habet, notum faceret mundo; ut ... mundus in amorem eius captivaretur.... Nequaquam ut a peccatis nos redimeret, neque propter quidquam aliud fuit mors Domini nostri, sed tantum ut mundus sentiret amorem quem habuit Deus erga creationem. Si hoc est mysterium oeconomiae Domini nostri, ut a servitute peccati nos redimeret, ergo si non peccatores fuissemus, locum non habuisset adventus Christi ... privati fuissent homini et angeli tota hac luce et scientia. Gratias ergo decet nos rependere peccato, quippe quia propter illud omnia haec bona accepimus.... Et hoc quo, si in justitia perstitissemus, digni habiti non essemus, hoc ipsum dedit nobis peccatum![64]

For Isaac, the motive of the Incarnation should be sought not in the remission of sins but in God's desire to

communicate his overflowing love for the world. The Incarnation is precisely what makes this love visible and draws humankind into returning love for love.[65] A different view is unthinkable to the bishop of Nineveh, who points out that it is absurd to think of the manifestation of Christ as a fortunate result of the Fall.[66] On the contrary, for Isaac the Incarnation is a crucial development in God's providence for human and angelic creation alike. In his *Homily* 28, he writes the following concerning the angels: "Before Christ's incarnate coming, the *theoria* of the intellect and vision, whereby the order of the celestial beings is moved, was not within their [the angels'] power, so that they could penetrate into these mysteries. But when the Word was made flesh, in Jesus a door was opened unto them, as the Apostle says."[67] The advent of Christ allowed the angels to have access to the mysteries. Since it would make no sense to speak of a restoration of the angelic access to the mysteries, it appears clear that the Incarnation is primarily a positive gift, hence a fulfillment of God's purpose in creating.

Even more interesting is Isaac's contention that discernment of the true reason for the advent is possible only through spiritual maturity and contemplative reading of Scripture.[68] The connection between the Incarnation and Adam's Fall is, according to Isaac, only the outer, common message of the Scripture. With spiritual advancement one is led to deeper insight and to the understanding that the death and resurrection of Christ did not occur for the redemption of our sins, but in order to manifest God's love for his creation. Pedagogically, as it were, both positions are correct, and Scripture does at times speak in "weak" language (i.e., a language that is inadequate to its object) in order to benefit the readers. Nevertheless, Isaac insists, the true significance of the Incarnation greatly surpasses the reference to our sins, since both creation

62 Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus* 5, Assert. 15 (PG 75:296AB). As part of God's eternal plan for humanity, drafted before creation, Christ is laid as a foundation to humankind so that, in the event of the Fall, the restoration of Adam would be possible.

63 P. Bettiolo, *Isacco di Ninive: Discorsi spirituali; Capitoli sulla cognoscenza, preghiere, contemplazione sull'argomento della gehenna, altri opuscoli* (Bose, 1990); A. Louf, *Isaac le Syrien: Œuvres spirituelles*, vol. 2, *41 discours récemment découverts*, Spiritualité Orientale 81 (Bellefontaine, 2003); M. Nin, *Isaac de Nínive: Centúries sobre el Coneixement*, Clàssics del Cristianisme 99 (Barcelona, 2005). A critical edition of the *Centuries* is currently being prepared by P. Bettiolo for CSCO.

64 Isaac of Nineveh, *Centuries on Spiritual Knowledge* 4.78, as quoted by Hausherr, "Précurseur de la théorie Scotiste" (n. 7 above), 318–19.

65 Cf. II/40.14, in *Isaac of Nineveh: "The Second Part" (Chapters IV–XLI)*, trans. S. Brock, CSCO 555, Scriptores syri 225 (Louvain, 1995), 178: Christ "came down to their abode and lived among them in their body just as one of them, and with a love exalted beyond knowledge or description ... he begged them to turn back to himself."

66 Here Isaac describes something quite similar to the "felix culpa" of the Western tradition (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 3.1.3, ad 3). Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 174.2: *si homo non perisset, Filius hominis non venisset.*

67 Isaac of Nineveh, *Ascetical Homily* 28 (= 84, in the Greek printed edition). Trans. D. Miller in *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (Boston, 1984), 139. This passage is also quoted by Nicodemus. See Nellas, *Deification* (n. 1 above), 231.

68 Isaac of Nineveh, *Centuries on Spiritual Knowledge* 4.85.

and redemption manifest the same unique economy of divine love.[69]

Nicholas Cabasilas

It has been noted that "in analyzing the nature of the spiritual life, Nicholas Cabasilas makes at the same time a particularly penetrating study of the true nature of man."[70] It is noteworthy that his anthropological vision is developed along the same lines—christological, liturgical, mystical—as that of Maximus the Confessor. The fundamental assumption governing Cabasilas's anthropology is the traditional belief in Christ as the image of God and paradigm of the human being: [71]

It was for the new man (διὰ τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον) that human nature was created;

It was not the old Adam who was the model (παράδειγμα) for the new, but the new Adam for the old;

The first Adam is an imitation (μίμημα) of the second, and has been fashioned in accordance with His pattern and image (κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν ἐκείνου καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα);

The Savior first and alone showed to us the true man, who is perfect on account of both character and life. . . . Such is the true definition of the human being (ὅρος ἀνθρώπου),[72] which God had before his eyes (πρὸς ὃ βλέπων . . . ὁ Θεός) when he fashioned him [Adam]. By this final end I mean a life without defilement. . . . We must regard Christ as the archetype (τὸν ἀρχέτυπον εἶναι) and the former Adam as derived from Him.

So then, for all these reasons humankind strives toward Christ by nature . . . not only because of His Godhead, . . . but because of His other [i.e., human] nature as well.

69 Ibid. 4.84, 4.79.
70 Nellas, *Deification*, 115.
71 All quotations are taken from *Life in Christ* 6.91–97. The Greek is from the critical edition: *Nicolas Cabasilas: La vie en Christ, Livres V–VII*, ed. and trans. M.-H. Congourdeau, SC 361 (Paris, 1989). The English translation is that of C. J. DeCatanzaro, *Nicolas Cabasilas: The Life in Christ* (Crestwood, NY, 1974), 190–91, with occasional emendations.
72 DeCatanzaro has "such is man's true goal."

To love anything beside Him . . . is a turning aside from the foundations laid in our nature from the beginning (τῶν ὑποτεθέντων τῇ φύσει ἐξ ἀρχῆς παρατροπή).[73]

Jesus Christ is the eternal idea, icon, pattern, form,[74] archetype of the human being, its ontological "hypothesis" and "definition." For this view I will henceforth use the term "christomorphic anthropology." Because he constitutes the pattern of both original humanity and the restored human being, "humankind strives toward Christ *by nature* . . . not only because of his divinity . . . but because of his other, human nature as well."

A crucial implication of Cabasilas's christomorphic anthropology is the fact that the Incarnation of the Logos appears as the original destiny of mankind: "such is man's true goal, and it was with a view to this end that God fashioned him. By this final end I mean a life without defilement, when his body has been purified of corruption and his will delivered from all sin." Yet such a life is rooted in Christ's "outpouring" into the world, as a fragrant myron that imparts incorruption.[75] It is therefore the hypostatic union, by which the distance between Godhead and humanity is overcome, that corresponds to the end that God had in mind when he fashioned Adam.[76]

Gregory Palamas

In his *Theological Chapters*, Gregory Palamas states that human nature has been created with a capacity for "both knowing and receiving God"; more concretely, it is not only capable of receiving God through struggle and grace (Θεοῦ δεκτικὸν δι᾽ ἀγῶνος καὶ χάριτος), but also capable of being united with God in a single hypostasis

73 DeCatanzaro has "turning aside from the first principles of our nature."
74 In baptism we are remodeled according to the blessed form (πρὸς τὸ . . . μακάριον εἶδος), and "stamped" (τυποῦντες) in view of "this blessed form and shape (εἰς τὸ μακάριον εἶδος ἐκεῖνο καὶ τὴν μορφὴν)" (*Life in Christ* 2.11, 2.34; see also 2.44).
75 *Life in Christ* 3.3; 3.5. These remarks are strongly reminiscent of Dionysius's discussion in *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (e.g., 4.3.4, PG 3:477D), where Christ manifests himself as myron to the entire hierarchy. If we admit that Cabasilas has a clear idea of the Ps.-Areopagitic doctrine, he is implicitly equating the cosmic outpouring of Christ with the "outpouring" of the Incarnation.
76 *Life in Christ* 3.5.

(δυνατὸν ἐνωθῆναι τούτῳ [Θεῷ] κατὰ μίαν ὑπόστασιν).⁷⁷ This places the hypostatic union in God's initial design for humankind, although Palamas does not specify whether the hypostatic union represents the prelapsarian goal of humanity (as in Maximus the Confessor), or a provision for the Fall (as in Cyril of Alexandria and Symeon the New Theologian). Another fragment, quoted by Nicodemus, seems to anticipate Cabasilas's christomorphic anthropology, discussed above:

> Even the original creation of the world was established for Him (πρὸς τοῦτον ἔβλεπε) who is baptized here below as son of man but is acknowledged by God from above as the only beloved Son ... even the original creation of man, when he was fashioned in the image of God, took place on His account, that man might be able some day to accommodate (χωρῆσαι) the Archetype. And the law decreed by God in Paradise was on His account (δι᾽ αὐτὸν). ... Nor is this all. ... The angelic natures and orders and the heavenly degrees, have also from the beginning had as their final end the dispensation of the Incarnation (τὴν θεανδρικὴν οἰκονομίαν).⁷⁸

Palamas affirms that the future "accommodation" of the Archetype (i.e., the Incarnation) is the final reason for creation. It is important to note that God's purpose for creation, including the hierarchies of angels, is the "theandric dispensation" made possible only in Christ.⁷⁹

It is clear that the idea of the Incarnation as mystery foreseen from eternity is rooted in a specific anthropological view, affirmed both by Palamas and, even more

emphatically, by Nicholas Cabasilas. Both authors speak of Christ as "model" or "paradigm" of humanity, so that not only the restored humanity but also the old Adam is viewed as being "in Christ." Both authors hold, in short, a christomorphic anthropology. In what follows I will argue that, far from being a late development in Byzantium, this view has venerable roots in earlier tradition.

Christ as the Prototype of Adam in Early Christian Thought

In this section I present two brief passages from Cabasilas and three texts that seem to provide a similar type of christomorphic anthropology.

Nicholas Cabasilas, *Life in Christ:*

To him [God] who has all things before his eyes (πρὸς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν) before they exist, the first Adam is an imitation (μίμημα) of the second, and has been fashioned in accordance with His pattern and image (κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν ἐκείνου καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα). ... Such is the true definition of the human being (ὅρος ἀνθρώπου), which God gazed upon (πρὸς ὃ βλέπων ... ὁ Θεός) when He fashioned him.⁸⁰

Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh:*

Remember that God was wholly concerned with and given unto it [the clay] ... in his love, which was dictating the lineaments of the imprint (*liniamenta imprimis*). For, whatever form the clay would take on (*limus exprimebatur*), it was Christ that God had in mind (*Christus cogitabatur*): namely, that he was to become man, the Word was to become flesh (which is what the clay, the earth was at that moment). For this had been the address (*praefatio*) of the Father to the Son, "Let us make man in our own image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26). "And God made man" ... "After the image of God did he make him" (Genesis 1:27), in other words, of Christ. For the Word is also God, who being in the image of God, "thought it not robbery to be equal to God" (Philippians 2:6). Thus, that clay which was at that moment putting

77 Palamas, *Chapters* 24. I have used the text and translation of R. Sinkewicz, ed., *Saint Gregory Palamas: The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters; A Critical Edition, Translation, and Study* (Toronto–Leiden, 1988).

78 Gregory Palamas, *Sermon on the Epiphany*, as quoted by Nellas, *Deification* (n. 1 above), 230.

79 Nicodemus turns this theandric dispensation into "the mystery of the *incarnate* dispensation of the divine Logos" (τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἐνσάρκου τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου οἰκονομίας), and explains the "accommodation" of the Archetype by means of an expansion that includes an explicit reference to the Incarnation: "do you see that God made man in His own image for this reason, that man might be able to accommodate the Archetype through the Incarnation (ἵνα δυνηθῇ νὰ χωρέσῃ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως)?" (Nellas, *Deification*, 228, 230). This is certainly not an over-interpretation of the text; nevertheless, as I have shown in the section dedicated to Maximus the Confessor, "theandric" and "incarnate" are not necessarily equivalent, since the latter includes not only the divinely established λόγος φύσεως, but also the τρόπος ὑπάρξεως introduced by the Fall.

80 Cabasilas, *Life in Christ* 6.12.92, 95. Cf. p. 208 above.

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on the image of the Christ who was to come in the flesh (*Christi futuri*) was not only the work, but also the pledge (*pignus*) of God.[81]

Jacob of Serug, *On That Chariot That Ezekiel the Prophet Saw:*

Before creation, the Father . . . gazed at the likeness of his Son and molded Adam, since he was going to give [the Son] to the world he delineated him beforehand. For this cause he said "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26), in this [same] likeness in which Mary gave birth to the Only One. The Father willed to send him in to the world as a man, and drew beforehand his form, the Great Image, in Adam (591);

The one who showed himself as a man was the same [as] the one [whom] the prophet [Ezekiel] saw again in the form of God (566);

The Son of God wanted to become a man, and it was for this reason that Ezekiel saw him as a man (575);

That likeness of a servant that he assumed within the womb (Philippians 2:6) was whispered on the wings of the heavenly being. Before he was to become what he became in latter times, he willed to show, in a great wonder, how he would become [it] (575).[82]

Byzantine Hymnography

O Thou who hast fashioned Eve from Adam's side

Thy side was pierced and from it flowed streams of cleansing

With Thy hand Thou hast fashioned Adam from the earth

and for his sake Thou hast become by nature man

and wast of Thine own will crucified.[83]

Thou, O Christ, with invisible hands hast fashioned man in Thine image

and thou hast now displayed the original beauty in this same human body formed by Thee.[84]

Lo, the time of our salvation is at hand.

Make ready, O cave; the Virgin draws nigh to give birth. . . . for Christ comes in His love for mankind, to save the man He fashioned.[85]

Each of these fragments has a different intentional context. Tertullian is interested in highlighting the nobility of the body, so as to defend the Incarnation.[86] Jacob of Serug seeks to convince his audience, seduced by apocalyptic traditions of ascent to the heavenly throne, that the enthroned Glory of God is manifested fully in the Incarnation, so that the Enthroned One is revealed in the Incarnation and accessible in the Eucharist of the Church.[87] The hymns' insistence on the coexistence of glory and kenosis in Christ illustrates the extensive and masterful cultivation of antithesis, parallelism, and paradox typical of Byzantine hymnography.[88] Significantly, the christological framing of creation and providence

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81 Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 6.3–5. Cf. Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 12.

82 English translation by Golitzin (unpublished). Large portions of the text are discussed in A. Golitzin, "The Image and Glory of God in Jacob of Serugh's Homily, 'On That Chariot That Ezekiel the Prophet Saw'," *SVThQ* 47 (2003): 323–64. For details on Jacob, see J. Kollamparampil, *Jacob of Serugh: Select Festal Homilies* (Rome–Bangalore, 1997), 1–15.

83 Holy Saturday Matins: First Stasis of the Lamentations. English text from *The Lenten Triodion*, trans. Mother Mary and K. Ware (London/Boston, 1978), 627, 629–30.

84 Second Canon of the Transfiguration: Ode 5, Sticheron 3. English text from *The Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and K. Ware (London/Boston, 1978), 486.

85 Forefeast of the Nativity: Vespers, *Glory . . . Now and ever* Sticheron at *Lord I have cried*. English text from *Festal Menaion*, 201.

86 The verse immediately preceding the above excerpt reads: "So often then does it receive honor, as often as it experiences the hands of God, when it is touched by them, and pulled, and drawn out, and molded into shape."

87 See the discussion in Golitzin, "Image and Glory of God," 354–59.

88 Consider the following examples: "Today he who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross. He who is King of the angels is arrayed in a crown of thorns. He who wraps the heaven in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery. He who in the Jordan set Adam free receives blows upon his face. The Bridegroom of the Church is transfixed with nails. The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear. We venerate your Passion, O Christ. Show us also your glorious Resurrection" (Holy Friday: antiphon 15); "Today, he who holds the whole creation in the hollow of his hand is born of the Virgin. He whom in essence none can touch is wrapped in swaddling clothes as a mortal. God who in the beginning founded the heavens lies in a manger. He who rained manna down on the people in the wilderness is fed on milk from his mother's breast. He who is the Bridegroom of the Church calls unto himself the Magi. The Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts. We worship your birth, O Christ. Show us also your divine Theophany!" (Eve of Nativity: *Glory . . . Now and ever . . .* sticheron at the ninth royal hour).

in the hymns, and the cosmic perspective applied to the Incarnation, highlight the intimate link between creation and restoration, which are both "in Christ."

It is notable that all the passages quoted above share the imagery used by Nicholas Cabasilas, namely that of God fashioning Adam while having before his eyes the incarnate Christ. Tertullian and Jacob of Serug even employ the same combination of biblical references, Genesis 1:26 and Philippians 2:6, even though Jacob never read Tertullian.

This is certainly a very old tradition in Christianity, since we find it in Irenaeus of Lyon, who represents one of the major influences on Tertullian,[89] and who was himself indebted to Theophilus of Antioch.[90] With the rapid dissemination of *Against Heresies* throughout the Empire, much of Irenaeus's theology became part of the bedrock of later mainstream Christianity East and West.[91] It comes as no surprise, then, that Irenaeus is the first patristic writer to be labeled a Scotist *avant la lettre*.

As far as the problem under discussion is concerned, one of the relevant passages is: "[A] Paulo <typus futuri> (τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος) dictus est ipse Adam (Romans 5, 14), quoniam futuram circa Filium Dei humani generis (τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος) dispositionem in semetipsum (ἐν αὐτῷ) fabricator omnium Verbum praeformaverat (προετύπωσεν), praedestinante Deo (ὁρίσαντος τοῦ Θεοῦ) primum animalem hominem videlicet ut a spiritali salvaretur. Cum enim praeexisteret salvans, oportebat et quod salvaretur fieri, uti non vacuum sit salvans."[92] It is perhaps easier to start with the second sentence. "Salvans" here obviously refers to the Savior, Christ, but "salvation" is not taken in the sense of redemption from a negative state, but in the sense of "leading to perfection"—that is, as we shall see, to full humanity. The meaning of Irenaeus's words is the following: *inasmuch as the One who saves* [in his capacity of spiritual Adam, who saves the fallen Adam] *pre-existed* [as the eternal Logos], *the one to be saved had to be created, too.*[93]

Adam is *typus futuri* because the Logos prefigured in him the future perfect mankind that would be manifested in the Incarnation: "even before being the *typos* of a regenerated mankind, Christ is the prototype of a perfect mankind."[94] Therefore, the Incarnation seems not so much God's saving response to the Fall of man, but rather the original destiny of mankind, premeditated from all eternity.

It is true that the text above provides no explicit christological affirmations.[95] Nevertheless, Irenaeus's christomorphic anthropology and Logos-centered cosmology, as well as his soteriological views (God becoming man, so that man could become God) can only confirm the conclusions of the text analysis. More than a simple creation of God, Adam enjoys a special ontological condition, due to the fact that he is made in God's image: not God's image, however, but rather *in* the image of God, i.e., structured in relation to—*through, in*, and *unto* the divine Logos, the true image of God.[96] From the very moment of creation, therefore, humanity is intimately linked to

89 This influence is particularly evident in *On the Resurrection of the Flesh, On the Flesh of Christ, Against the Valentinians*, and *On the Prescription against Heretics*. See J. Alexandre, *Une chair pour la gloire: L'anthropologie réaliste et mystique de Tertullien* (Paris, 2001), 165 and n. 1.

90 See F. Loofs, *Theophilus' von Antiochien "Adversus Marcionem" und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus*, TU 46 (Leipzig, 1930). Loofs's assertions, however, that Irenaeus was only an inept compiler of older theological traditions which he was not even capable of understanding correctly (432–34), have not convinced the scholarly community (B. Altaner, *Patrologie* [Freiburg im Breisgau, 1938], 79; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 3 vols. [Utrecht–Brussels, 1950], 1:290).

91 Colin Roberts (*Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* [London–New York, 1979], 53) mentions an "early fragment . . . of Irenaeus's treatise *Adversus Haereses* that reached Oxyrhynchus not long after the ink was dry on the author's manuscript." Irenaeus's theology is both "archaic," in the sense that it often echoes what is conventionally called "the theology of Jewish Christianity," but also extremely relevant for later theological authorities. For a detailed catalogue of all Irenaean fragments and references to Irenaeus preserved in Greek and Latin authors, see A. von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig, 1893), 1:263–67.

92 *Adv. haer.* 3.22.3. I am following the text provided in *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les hérésies*, book 3, vol. 2, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, SC 211 (Paris, 1974).

93 See A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les hérésies*, book 3, vol. 1, SC 210 (Paris, 1974), 372. In support of this interpretation, we have *Adv. haer.* 4.38.4: "secundum providentiam scivit hominum infirmitatem et quae ventura essent ex ea; secundum autem dilectionem et virtutem vincet factae naturae substantiam. Oportuerat autem primo naturam apparere, post deinde vinci, et absorbe mortale ab immortalitate et corruptibile ab incorruptibilitate."

94 D'Alès, "Doctrine de la récapitulation" (n. 7 above), 191.

95 Harnack insists on this point, and argued that "we ought not to ask if Irenaeus understood the incarnation as a definite purpose necessarily involved in the Sonship, as this question falls outside the sphere of Patristic thinking." A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. N. Buchanan (New York, 1958), 2:266.

96 *Adv. haer.* 1.1.21; 5.16.2; 4.33.4; *Dem.* 22. Creation "in the image" refers to Adam's *psycho-somatic unity*: per manus Patris, hoc est per Filium et Spiritum, fit homo secundum similitudinem Dei, *sed non pars hominis* (*Adv. haer.* 5.6.1).

the Logos, so that the Incarnation of the Logos, far from being an event "alien" to human nature, represents the fulfillment of its profound mystery. Another Irenaean passage may provide more clarity: "Propter hoc enim Verbum Dei homo, et qui Filius Dei est, Filius hominis factus est, ut homo... fiat filium Dei. Non enim aliter percipere incorruptelam et immortalitatem nisi aduniti fuissemus incorruptelae et immortalitati. Quemadmodum autem adunari possemus incorruptelae et immortalitati nisi prius incorruptela et immortalitas facta fuisset id quod et nos, ut absorberetur quod erat corruptibile ab incorruptela et quod erat mortale ab immortalitate, uti filiorum adoptionem perciperemus?"[97]

This text speaks of deification as the rationale of the Incarnation. No mention whatsoever is made of the Fall. The demonstration is constructed not on the negative conception of being rescued from the Fall, but on the positive idea of *acquiring* the divine gifts of incorruptibility and immortality. Indeed, for Irenaeus, the Fall seems not so much the loss of a certain original perfection as the interruption of what ought to have been his original path, his growth unto perfection.[98] In another text, drawn from the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, the Fall is mentioned only after the rationale of the Incarnation is presented in similar terms: "He united man with God and wrought a communion of God and man, we being unable to have any participation in incorruptibility if it were not for His coming to us, for in incorruptibility, whilst being invisible, benefitted us nothing: so He became visible, that we might, in all ways, obtain a participation in incorruptibility."[99] As John Behr notes, "The apostasy rendered the creature who had been created for immortality mortal; it did not transform an originally spiritual Adam into a merely 'psychical' being.... The Incarnation of the Word is thus central to the accomplishment of the divine economy, and although perhaps conditioned by the apostasy, the Incarnation was certainly not occasioned by it."[100]

In conclusion, according to Irenaeus, the goal inscribed in humanity's very being at the moment of creation can be accomplished only in Christ. But whence does Irenaeus receive this doctrine of Christ as the archetype of Adam?

Second Temple Roots

The thesis of scholars associated with the so-called *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (Richard Reitzenstein, Wilhelm Bousset, later Rudolf Bultmann and his disciples)—that the high Christology of certain New Testament passages ought to be read against the background of allegedly older Gnostic "Urmensch" speculations of Iranian origin—has now been discarded as a scholarly myth.[101] Both Gnostic and "mainstream" Christian doctrinal speculations are more likely to have resulted from creative reworking of traditions inherited from earlier Jewish tradition, at times in conjunction with influences from the larger Hellenistic culture.

Scholars of Second Temple Judaism have demonstrated that "the Anthropos-figure in Gnosticism appears to derive from the divine Glory in Judaism."[102] According to Gilles Quispel, the theme of God's manifestation as anthropomorphic Glory—that is, Man and Glory—can be traced from Ezekiel[103] to later prophetic (e.g., Is 40:5), and apocalyptic (1 En 46.1) works, and they remain paradigmatic for the articulation of cosmological and visionary

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97 Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.19.1.

98 Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.11.1; 4.38.1–63.1; *Dem.* 12; 14. The primordial state of the *child* Adam is conceived not in terms of perfection but rather in terms of perfectibility.

99 *On the Apostolic Preaching* 31. The English translation has been taken from *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: On the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. J. Behr (Crestwood, NY, 1997), 60.

100 J. Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford–New York, 2000), 60.

101 C. Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule: Darstellung und Kritik ihres Bildes vom gnostischen Erlösermythus* (Göttingen, 1961); I. P. Culianu, *The Tree of Gnosis* (San Francisco, 1992); E. M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1973); idem, "Pre-Christian Gnosticism, the New Testament and Nag Hammadi in Recent Debate," *Themelios* 10 (1984): 22–27; idem, "The Issue of Pre-Christian Gnosticism Reviewed in the Light of the Nag Hammadi Texts," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*, ed. J. D. Turner and A. McGuire (Leiden, 1997), 72–88; K. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA–London, 2003), 84–109.

102 J. Fossum, "Colossians 1.15–18a in the Light of Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism," *NTS* 35 (1989): 183–201, at 198. See also G. Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26 in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosis," *VChr* 34 (1980): 1–13. Quispel had earlier derived the Gnostic Urmensch-figure from Jewish traditions about Adam and Sophia ("Der gnostische Anthropos und die jüdische Tradition," in *Gnostic Studies* [Istanbul, 1974], 1:173–95), but later renounced this hypothesis.

103 "God, when he reveals himself, is like man.... Or rather his *kabod* is... And for this prophet the manifestation of *kabod* was an experience of light" (Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26," 1).

accounts in Rabbinic literature,[104] on the one hand, and in the New Testament, early patristic authors,[105] Gnostics,[106] Mandaeans,[107] and Manichaeans,[108] on the other. The "heavenly Man" is also crucial for the *Hermetica*, where Jewish themes are known to figure prominently.[109]

Of course, the treatment of the idea of "heavenly Man" as "image of God" varies in the respective groups. In the Alexandrian diaspora, the connection with Middle Platonic doctrine was inevitable.[110] Consequently, "for Hellenistic Jewish mystics like Philo, the figure of man on

the divine throne described in Genesis, Exodus, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Psalms . . . was also understood as the *ideal* and immortal man."[111] Philo's reinterpretation of the heavenly Anthropos follows a pattern of programmatic "spiritualization" or "psychologization" of apocalyptic motifs that occurs, for instance, in his treatment of the "watchers" myth.[112] Nevertheless, Philo sometimes uses the designation "Man" for the Logos and, as Jarl Fossum tells us, "frequently identifies the divine image after which man was created as the Logos."[113]

New Testament writings (e.g., Colossians 1:15) instead, followed by both mainstream Christianity and dualistic groups, "continued the original Jewish tradition about the divine Glory, the man-like form of the essentially invisible Godhead appearing in throne-theophany visions."[114] This should not mean, however, that Christians simply *continued* to use such Second Temple imagery. Christian exegesis is also profoundly revolutionary: the belief in the incarnation of the Logos, and the centrality of Christ's death and resurrection, operate a spectacular "bending" of the apocalyptic framework and engender a new symbolic world.[115] Nevertheless, many of the building blocks of this new symbolic world are inherited from Second Temple Judaism.

Moreover, despite the very different doctrinal framework, both dualistic and non-dualistic writings of the early centuries of the Christian era are using Jewish and Jewish-Christian midrash on Genesis, as exemplified, for instance, by the wordplay between τὸ φῶς ("light") and ὁ φώς ("man").[116] Gnostics "are known to have hypostasized

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104 Here, Quispel notes the esoteric speculations of the Shiur Qomah: "The extent, dimension, form or body of God is identical with his Glory. . . . Form, Adam, Body, Glory are interchangeable and refer to the manifestation of God" (Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26," 3). See also the recent study by S. Bunta, "The Likeness of the Image: Adamic Motifs and *Tselem* Anthropology in Rabbinic Traditions About Jacob's Image Enthroned in Heaven," *JJS* 37 (2006): 55–84.

105 Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 128.2, where the Power which comes from the Father is termed Angel, Glory, Male, or Man.

106 Irenaeus reports about the Gnostic doctrine of the "homo perfectus et verus, quem et Adamantem vocant quia neque ipse domatus est" (*Adv. Haer* 1.29.2). In a number of writings found at Nag Hammadi, we read of the Man or Son of Man, or "Geradamas"—a term that, according to Quispel ("Ezekiel 1:26," 4) may abbreviate "Geron Adam," thus, Adam Qadmon: *On the Origin of the World* 108.8–9; *Letter of Eugnostos* 76.19–77.6; *Apocr. Joh.* 8.34–35; *Melchisedek* 9.1; 6.6; *Zostrianos* 8.1. *Letter of Eugnostos*: "In the beginning, he [God] decided to have his likeness come into being as Great Power. Immediately the *arche* of that light was manifested as an immortal, androgynous Man" (76.19–47; quoted in Fossum, "Colossians 1.15–18a" [n. 102 above], 192; I omit the Coptic terms).

107 As for instance in "the Mandaean concept of the Adam Qadmaia, the primordial Man. . . . This is God's first-born Son, and should be distinguished from the physical Adam whom he preceded by many myriads of years. He is also called . . . Adam Kasia, Secret Adam, or Adakas Ziwa, Adam the Kabod. The fact that this first emanation is both celestial Man and Glory shows that this Mandaean speculation has Israelitic roots and ultimately goes back to the first chapter of Ezekiel" (Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26," 3).

108 "When the evil tried to penetrate into the realm of Light, God decided to go down himself and fight against it. Thereupon he called forth the Mother of Life. And she in her turn evoked the Primal Man [in Syriac *naša kadmaya* = Hebrew *Adam kadmon*]. He goes forth to combat against darkness, is overpowered by the hostile powers, but later returns to the world above from which he originated" (Theodore bar Konai, *Liber Scholiorum* 11, cited in Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26," 7).

109 In *Poimandres* 1.12ff., God generates a son, the Anthropos, who is androgynous, both Light and Life. The Anthropos "has the image (εἰκών) of God," and manifests God's beautiful form (τὴν καλὴν Θεοῦ μορφήν), and the bodies of humans will be fashioned by Nature according to the εἶδος of the Anthropos.

110 Fossum ("Colossians 1.15–18a" [n. 102 above], 188) notes the very probable connection, in the theological thought of Alexandrian Judaism, between εἶδος ἀνθρώπου in Parm 130C, ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου in Ezek. 1:26 (LXX).

111 A. Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven–London, 1990), 42. Emphasis mine.

112 "Philo distinguishes between a heavenly and an earthly man. But the οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος, the κατ᾽ εἰκόνα γεγονώς is the νοῦς ἐξαίρετος or ἡγεμονικός, the rational soul in man; whilst the γήικος, the πλασθεὶς ἄνθρωπος is the νοῦς γεώδης, the brute soul in man" (B. A. Stegman, *Christ, "The Man From Heaven": A Study of 1 Cor 15: 45–47 in the Light of the Anthropology of Philo Judaeus* [Washington, DC, 1927], 48).

113 Fossum, "Colossians 1.15–18a," 188 (numerous references to Philonic works are given at 188 n. 1).

114 Ibid., 201.

115 As J. J. Collins notes (*Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI, 1998], 278), "The Christian apocalypticist writes at a different point on the eschatological timetable from his Jewish counterpart. The messiah has already come. The life of the messiah, and especially his suffering and death, are available to the Christian visionary as a source of inspiration and example."

116 *Gospel of the Egyptians*: "For this one, Adamas, is a light which radiated from the Light. For this is the first Man, he through whom and for whom everything became, and without whom nothing became";

the divine image in Gen. 1:26 as a heavenly Man."[117] Among authors affiliated with mainstream Christianity, one of the most spectacular pieces of Christian midrash on Genesis is found precisely in Irenaeus. In his *Demonstration* Irenaeus undertakes to prove the preexistence of the Son by quoting Genesis 1:1 in a distorted Hebrew transliteration (*Baresit bara Elovim basan benuam samenthares*) of which he offers the following translation: "the Son in the beginning; God created heaven and earth."[118] It is highly probable that Irenaeus was quoting, not the Genesis text, but rather a Jewish-Christian midrash in Hebrew or Aramaic, and an *already existing* translation—both incorporated in the same document.[119]

Tertullian identifies Christ the Logos with the primordial light (*Adv. Prax.* 7.1); cf. Clement, *Paed* 1.6. For a discussion of the wordplay, see J. Fossum, "Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism," *VChr* 37 (1983): 266–67; A. DeConick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden–New York–Cologne, 1996), 22.

117 Fossum, "Colossians 1.15–18a," 201. In the myth of Satornilus (Hippolytus, *Ref. omn. haer.* 7.28.2), the angels decide to create man in imitation of the shining image that appears from above. It is interesting that they exhort one another saying: "let us make man after the image and likeness" (κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν). "Image" seems to constitute an entity in itself. A text espousing a similar variation of the Gnostic creation myth (*Origin of the World*) has a more detailed description of the manifestation from on high: as soon as the demiurge proclaims his uniqueness, a "light appears, a likeness of man, which was very beautiful." We can, thus, conclude that the Gnostics hypostatize the "image" and identity it with the heavenly Anthropos.

118 Irenaeus, *Dem.* 43. According to the punctuation, "Son" could either be the object of a sentence ending with "God" ("a Son in the beginning God created; then heaven and earth") or the subject of a sentence ending "beginning" ("a Son in the beginning; God then created heaven and earth"). The SC critical edition supports the latter: *Irénée de Lyon: Démonstration de la prédication apostolique*, ed. and trans. A. Rousseau, SC 406 (Paris, 1995). For a detailed study to justify this choice and exegesis of the passage, see pp. 289–98. Behr's translation, while deliberately leaving the sentence unpunctuated, in order to preserve the ambiguity, agrees with the solution in SC 406 (see Irenaeus of Lyon, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, 109 n. 121).

119 This midrash may well have been part of a testimonia-collection, since right after the mysterious Hebrew passage, Irenaeus offers two composite quotes: the first one (Ps. 109.3 + 71.17) to be found, with the same wording, in Justin's *Dialogue* 76 and a fictitious one, quoted also in Lactantius, *De div. inst.* 4.8.1. "Before the morning star I begot you and your name is before the sun. And again he says: Blessed is He who was before." Details in A. Benoit, *Saint Irénée: Introduction à l'étude de sa théologie* (Paris, 1960), 87–88; J. P. Smith, "Hebrew Christian Midrash in Irenaeus Epid. 43," *Biblica* 38 (1957): 24–34; A. Rousseau, "La doctrine de Saint Irénée sur la préexistence du Fils de Dieu dans *Dem.* 43," *Le Muséon* 89 (1971): 5–42; idem, "Notes" in SC 406: 289–98; D. Cerbelaud, "La citation hébraique de la Démonstration d'Irénée (*Dem.* 43): une proposition," *Le Muséon* 104 (1991): 221–34.

Obviously, since Irenaeus was himself using and passing on such Christian traditions—and it is significant that the quotation occurs in the *Demonstration*, a profoundly traditional piece of catechetical writing—one may assume that speculations on Genesis 1:26 and Christ as the prototype of Adam must have been widespread, perhaps even part of catechetical instruction, in the second and third centuries.

Even though the last two sections seem to have strayed from the topic of this article, the material discussed in these pages was crucially important to understanding the views on the Incarnation that found their mature expression in fourteenth-century Byzantium. It should now be clear that the christomorphic anthropology of Nicholas Cabasilas can boast of venerable roots in Christian tradition.

Conclusions

This study was prompted by a question that Florovsky raised with respect to Maximus the Confessor and the motive of the Incarnation: "What is the actual weight of the witness of St. Maximus? Was it more than his private opinion ... ?"[120] I hope to have furnished enough evidence to substantiate a positive answer to the latter question.

In my judgment, which echoes that of numerous scholars, the Confessor believes that the Incarnation is essentially unrelated to the Fall, but is rather an expression of the primordial mystery of creation. One important element in Maximus's thought is the theological connection between the cosmic presence of the Logos and the incarnated Logos. The Confessor uses this link to affirm explicitly that the Incarnation was inscribed in the very design of creation, and that it represents the fulfilment of God's creative purpose. This view finds an important antecedent in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and is echoed, albeit without the conceptual apparatus, in Isaac of Nineveh's *Centuries*.

There is, then, a second element that supports the idea of the Incarnation as a mystery divinely predestined from eternity. It is a view of human nature that can be termed "christomorphic anthropology," inasmuch as it presupposes Christ as the prototype both of the Adamic

120 "Cur Deus Homo" (n. 5 above), 170.

creation and of humanity restored in Christ. This view forms an important trajectory in Christian thought, uniting later Byzantine authors, most notably Nicholas Cabasilas, to earlier Byzantine hymnography and to patristic writers such as Jacob of Serug, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and stretching even further back to the very beginnings of Christian thought. Maximus's understanding of the Incarnation as related essentially to the moment of creation and not to the Fall can therefore hardly be an exception (no matter how "major" an exception) in patristic and later Byzantine theology.

When, in the eighteenth century, Nicodemus Hagiorites reaffirmed this tradition, defending it against "certain learned men, who occupy themselves particularly with sacred theology," his confidence that he was speaking in full accord with the witness of Holy Scripture and the patristic tradition is striking. I could find no better words to end this paper than his own final statement: "I have not written on this matter in accordance with my own opinion and teaching but have followed the teaching of the theologians I have mentioned. But if some people are perhaps moved by passion to condemn me . . . they would be condemning rather the Godbearing Maximos, Gregory of Thessaloniki, Andrew the Great, and the others, from whom I have drawn this teaching."[121]

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121   Trans. Nellas, *Deification* (n. 1 above), 237.